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THE VALUE AND FUTURE OF SPANISH

The following correspondence has such general interest that the members of the Association will enjoy the privilege of reading it.

WILLIAMS COLLEGE, *Williamstown, Mass., October 6, 1920.*

LAWRENCE A. WILKINS, Esq., *Board of Education, New York City.*

MY DEAR SIR: Williams College is trying to get some information as to the quality of the teaching of Spanish in the secondary schools which prepare for college, both public and private, and is desirous of having such information as you may be able to give us by brief answers to the following questions:

1. Where have the teachers of Spanish generally received their preparation to teach Spanish?

2. Do you think that for entrance to college two or three years of Spanish as now taught in the secondary schools is a reasonable substitute for two or three years respectively of French or German?

3. Do you think that interest in the study of Spanish is likely to remain permanent?

Very truly yours, ROBERT L. TAYLOR

New York City, October 14, 1920.

PROF. ROBERT L. TAYLOR, *Williamstown, Mass.*

MY DEAR PROFESSOR TAYLOR: I have your circular letter of October 6, and I desire to reply thereto in some detail. I shall consider the matter largely from our local point of view, though as President of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish I have considerable information about the situation in the country at large.

1. Our teachers of Spanish have been trained in the universities of New York and vicinity, in graduate and extension courses, in summer school sessions, in private study with the aids of tutors, and in considerable contact with the 200,000 Spanish-speaking people of the metropolis. Many of them had studied in Spanish-speaking countries before the war, especially in Spain and Porto Rico. This summer a good many of them studied and traveled in Spain, some in Porto Rico, others in Costa Rica.

There is at present a steadily growing development of advanced instruction in the Spanish language and literature in the universities of the country. These courses include not only courses in the language itself, but in methods of teaching, philology, and old, modern, and contemporary literature of Spain and Spanish America. There are nearly 100 graduate students in Spanish in Columbia University and some seven or eight of these are soon to be examined for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

These teachers have been able, most of them because of maturity and especially because of their great enthusiasm, to prepare themselves well in the past three years to teach Spanish in secondary schools.

2. Two or three years of Spanish, as now taught in the secondary schools, is, indeed, not only a substitute, as you say, for two or three years of French

or German, but is fully equal in every respect to the training, mental, linguistic, literary and cultural, that is to be secured from a study of French or German.

Spanish is a difficult language to teach or to acquire, but it is being taught and acquired in New York City with as great, if not greater, success than is French. There are nearly 400 teachers of French and Spanish in our high schools. I am out in their classes nearly every day. Beyond doubt Spanish is taught here with just as satisfactory results, at least, as is French; some high school principals will say with even more satisfactory results. Practically no German is taught at present, but it is expected that beginning February 1, 1921, beginning classes in German will again be instituted.

3. The interest in the study of Spanish is not only likely to remain permanent—it is likely to increase steadily. The people at large are demanding more and more (since the spring of 1913) that their young folks be given in the high school, "the college of the people," opportunities to study Spanish equal to those that have been traditionally provided in French and German.

The enclosed table of figures may be of interest to you.

Finally, Spanish is now accepted year for year on a par with other languages for admission to practically all colleges and universities, undergraduate course.

The comprehensive examinations of the College Entrance Examination Board make it possible for a candidate to present three years of Spanish. Spanish is accepted on a par with other languages for the Cornell State Scholarships; for graduation from the New York City high schools; and for the prize scholarships to undergraduates in Cornell University.

Only the most conservative institutes of the East are still backward in accepting Spanish for entrance. It is the chief foreign language presented for that purpose in some of the universities of the West.

Yours very truly, LAWRENCE A. WILKINS,
Director of Modern Languages in High Schools.

REGISTRATION IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES IN NEW YORK CITY HIGH SCHOOLS

	1918		1919		1920	
	February	October	March	October	March	October
French	17, 543	19, 065	20, 920	19, 993	20, 336	19, 084
German	12, 956	6, 816	3, 287	909	532	60
Italian	56	63	66	65	125	144
Latin	16, 478	13, 686	15, 234	14, 218	14, 845	14, 522
Spanish	21, 771	22, 161	25, 729	25, 536	28, 801	28, 339

ENROLLMENT BY TERMS IN NEW YORK CITY HIGH SCHOOLS, OCTOBER 15, 1920

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
French	5, 438	4, 029	3, 560	2, 902	1, 694	1, 165	206	90	19, 084
German						24	11	25	60
Greek	48	31	39	29	19	2			168
Italian	72	36	13	12	6	5			144
Latin	4, 564	3, 083	2, 502	1, 841	1, 162	954	290	126	14, 522
Spanish	9, 961	7, 190	4, 603	3, 160	1, 691	1, 367	217	150	28, 339